

The Pronunciation Accent of the First Semester TBI Students

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ABSTRAK

Aksen memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap pemahaman bahasa dan pelafalan, terutama bagi penutur non-native. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana berbagai aksen memengaruhi pemahaman mendengarkan (listening comprehension) pembelajar bahasa Inggris serta mengidentifikasi tantangan pelafalan yang umum terjadi. Studi ini merujuk pada temuan dari sepuluh jurnal akademik dan menggunakan metode survei serta wawancara terhadap lima partisipan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa aksen yang tidak familiar meningkatkan beban kognitif, menghambat pemahaman, dan memicu kecemasan. Hal ini terutama terjadi ketika penutur berbicara dengan cepat atau memiliki pelafalan yang khas. Kondisi ini menyulitkan pembelajar dalam menangkap makna secara tepat dan memperlambat proses akuisisi bahasa. Selain itu, aksen tertentu seperti British, Indian, atau Australian English menimbulkan lebih banyak tantangan dibandingkan aksen Amerika yang lebih sering diajarkan. Oleh karena itu, hasil penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya membiasakan pembelajar dengan beragam aksen dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa. Paparan terhadap variasi pelafalan tidak hanya membantu meningkatkan daya adaptasi pendengar, tetapi juga mempersiapkan mereka untuk berkomunikasi dalam konteks global yang multikultural. Hal ini penting dalam era globalisasi, di mana interaksi lintas budaya dan bahasa semakin intensif.

Kata kunci: Aksen, Pemahaman Mendengarkan, Pelafalan, Beban Kognitif, Pembelajar Bahasa, Komunikasi Global.

ABSTRACT

Accent has a significant impact on language comprehension and pronunciation, especially for non-native speakers. This research aims to explore how different accents affect English learners' listening comprehension and identify common pronunciation challenges. The study draws on findings from ten academic journals and uses survey methods as well as interviews with five participants. The results showed that unfamiliar accents increase cognitive load, hinder comprehension and trigger anxiety. This is especially true when speakers speak quickly or have distinctive pronunciation. This makes it difficult for learners to grasp the meaning correctly and slows down the language acquisition process. In addition, certain accents such as British, Indian, or Australian English pose more challenges than the American accent that is more commonly taught. Therefore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of familiarizing learners with diverse accents in the language learning process. Exposure to pronunciation variations not only helps improve listeners' adaptability, but also prepares them to communicate in a global, multicultural context. This is important in the era of globalization, where cross-cultural and linguistic interactions are intensifying.

Keywords: Accent, Listening Comprehension, Pronunciation, Cognitive Load, Language Learners, Global Communication

1. INTRODUCTION

Accents are integral elements of spoken language, linked to a person's cultural, social and geographical context. Accents make a rich part of new languages, but what is being said can be a little hard to decipher at times, particularly if you are someone who is learning a new language. It's no wonder that English, the global lingua franca (though a native language to only 328 million), has vastly different accents like American, British, Australian and Indian that can make it problematic for language students who struggle to distinguish these sounds.

Processing new accents presents special challenges for non-native speakers. According to research, understanding may be hampered by the mental work needed to decode an unusual pronunciation (Munro & Derwing, 1999). A solid understanding and the capacity for effective communication become essential as this becomes more and more significant in social, professional, and educational contexts.

The difficulties with accents extend beyond comprehension. The phonetic structure of a speaker's original language frequently shapes their pronunciation, affecting how they hear and produce sounds in a second language (Best & Tyler, 2007). Anxiety and self-consciousness exacerbate these challenges, especially when speaking among native speakers

Accents also act as a linguistic filter, affecting how viewers interpret and comprehend the information that is being delivered. Accents have social connotations, according to Lippi-Green (1997), and listeners may unintentionally infer certain qualities from a speaker based on their accent, such as intelligence or reliability. This impression could affect interactions, particularly in professional settings where trustworthiness and clear communication are crucial

The rhythm and tempo of accented speech are also important factors. Non-native listeners frequently find it difficult to adjust to unfamiliar speech rhythms and stress patterns, especially when those patterns deviate from those in their first language, according to studies like Jenkins' (2000). Because of these variations, non-native speakers encounter even more cognitive difficulties, making accent comprehension a crucial ability in the globalized world of today.

The current study looks at how non-native English speakers' pronunciation and comprehension are affected by various accents. It seeks to offer useful suggestions for teachers and students by utilizing theoretical frameworks and participant perspectives. Additionally, this study aims to add to the larger conversation about inclusive language training methods that take into account the various linguistic realities of contemporary communication.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

1. **Intelligibility of Speech Intelligibility**, according to Munro and Derwing (1995), is the extent to which a listener comprehends a speaker. Accents, particularly ones that listeners are unfamiliar with, frequently make a message harder to understand and require more mental work to interpret.
2. **Cognitive Load Theory** According to Sweller (1988), interpreting foreign accents puts more strain on listeners' cognitive abilities, reducing their ability to comprehend meaning. According to this notion, listeners who are exposed to unfamiliar regional accents may find it difficult to understand them.
3. **The Sociolinguistic Viewpoint** Accents provide social meaning that affects listeners' attitudes and perceptions, according to Lippi-Green (1997). The listener's

- willingness to participate in accented speech may be influenced by these impressions, which could have an effect on communication in general
4. **Acquisition of Second Languages (SLA)** The input theory of Krashen (1982) emphasizes how crucial intelligible input is to language acquisition. Significantly different accents from that of a student can impede this process and postpone language acquisition.
 5. **Anxiety over Foreign Languages** Unfamiliar accents increase the anxiety associated with speaking and hearing in a foreign language, according to research by Horwitz et al. (1986). In addition to impairing pronunciation and comprehension, this fear lowers confidence.
 6. **Phonological Dissonance** According to Flege (1995), learners' phonological knowledge in their first language frequently hinders their capacity to recognize and generate sounds in a second language. When speaking with people who have different accents, this interference might cause miscommunications and a decrease in confidence
 7. **Variability in English Worldwide** According to Jenkins (2000), exposure to a variety of dialects has risen as English has become more widely used as a lingua franca (ELF). However, native-like accents are still valued highly in many language education programs, which hinders students' capacity to adjust to communication in everyday situations.
 8. **The Significance of Experience** According to Gass and Varonis (1984), understanding a speaker's accent gradually increases comprehension. This emphasizes how crucial it is for language learners to be exposed to a variety of accents on a regular basis.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study investigated how accents impact non-native English speakers' comprehension using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Five participants from UIN North Sumatera English education program participated in questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as part of the data collection procedure

1. Participants: Five non-native English-speaking students from TBI-1 were selected.
2. Survey: Participants responded to questions assessing their comprehension of various English accents and shared their challenges.
3. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences, focusing on issues such as rapid speech, unfamiliar pronunciations, and the importance of accent familiarity.

We developed a thematic analysis to identify themes and trends of challenges faced by participants. The quantitative data from the surveys showed how much each of these factors' speech pace, clarity of pronunciation, and vocabulary limitations impacted comprehension. The two methods provided a combined picture of how accent affects language understanding.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results of the Survey Accents have a major impact on comprehension, according to all five subjects. Among the main challenges mentioned were rapid speech and strange pronunciations. 30% of participants reported having trouble comprehending native speakers with regional accents like Southern American or British Cockney.

Interview Perspectives Common themes emerged throughout the interviews:

1. **Anxiety:** Participants reported feeling more anxious while speaking with native speakers because they were afraid of miscommunication.
2. **Cognitive Effort:** Participants reported that it took more mental work to comprehend foreign accents, which left less time for conversing.
3. **Need for Exposure:** According to the participants, understanding and confidence could be enhanced by frequent exposure to different accents.

Additional Observations:

1. **Pronunciation Issues:** A number of participants mentioned having trouble identifying phonemes that are absent from their mother tongue, which might cause miscommunications.
2. **Cultural Impediments:** Understanding becomes even more difficult because accents frequently convey cultural nuances that non-native speakers are not familiar with.

Wider Trends in Understanding The results are consistent with previous studies showing that exposure to a variety of accents gradually enhances listening comprehension (Munro & Derwing, 1999). Participants did point out, though, that speaking quickly and with a foreign accent makes things more difficult. This implies that in order to boost learners' confidence, customized language programs should balance exposure to both slow and fast-paced speech.

Learning and Technology A number of participants reported that practicing with various accents was made easier by technology-based learning resources including internet movies and listening applications. To obtain real-world experience, they also underlined the value of interactive practice, such as having discussions with both native and non-native speakers. This demonstrates that a dual strategy integrating technology within a person communication is a successful way to deal with accent-related issues.

Useful Consequences Teachers of languages should incorporate a variety of accents into their lesson plans. Research by Field (2005) shows that practicing different dialects improves listening comprehension and flexibility. Learners can be better prepared for communication in the real world by using multimedia materials that feature speakers with a variety of regional and international accents.

Misunderstanding Ayu Juniaty Siregar et al. (2024) found accent can cause communication difficulties. Language learners must concentrate on honing their pronunciation since factors like regional accents and phonetic variances can create barriers that inhibit comprehension. According to the research, learners may improve their clarity and fluency in pronunciation with the right instruction and regular practice, which will ultimately help them communicate more effectively with native speakers.

Cultural Identity Yani Lubis (2024) asserts that cultural identification is important when learning a language, particularly when it comes to accent and pronunciation. According to the article, EFL students' original tongue affects not just how they pronounce English words but also how they see themselves and their place in the language community. Accents can influence learners' confidence and willingness to speak in English since they

are frequently used as indicators of cultural identity, reflecting their experiences and backgrounds. Language teaching strategies can be improved by being aware of and responsive to these cultural factors, which will help students become more proficient in pronouncing words correctly and create a more welcoming atmosphere that celebrates a variety of linguistic backgrounds.

Additionally, interactive resources like speech recognition software can assist students in practicing with different accents. For instance, in order to replicate real-world language use, programs such as Rosetta Stone and Duolingo have incorporated a variety of accents into their modules.

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Limitations The limited sample size of this study restricts how far the results may be applied. A bigger and more varied sample size should be used in future studies to examine the effects of accent exposure on students in various settings. Furthermore, longitudinal research may shed further light on how accent familiarity evolves over time.

4. CONCLUSION

This article emphasizes how important accents are for non-native English speakers' pronunciation and understanding. Unfamiliar accents make communication more difficult, cause anxiety, and increase cognitive strain. The results support a teaching strategy that emphasizes exposure to a variety of dialects in order to increase students' flexibility and self-assurance.

Teachers could plan conversational practice sessions and use multimedia resources that display a variety of dialects to overcome these difficulties. Language programs can better prepare students for communication in a globalized world by creating an inclusive atmosphere that respects linguistic diversity.

Effective communication in the age of globalization requires the capacity to understand and adjust to a variety of accents. The results of this study are consistent with more general linguistic research that highlights the necessity of inclusive and all-encompassing methods of teaching languages. Learners can develop higher language and cultural competency by overcoming accent-related difficulties and better navigating the complexities of real-world interaction.

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